

2002HANOI00430 - UNCLASSIFIED

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ACTION EAP-00

INFO LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00	SRPP-00
DS-00	FBIE-00	UTED-00	VC-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	LAB-01
VCE-00	DCP-01	NSAE-00	SCT-00	TEST-00	USIE-00	ASDS-01
IIP-00	DSCC-00	DRL-02	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/005W	
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FM AMEMBASSY HANOI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5603
INFO AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH CITY
ASEAN COLLECTIVE
USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI

UNCLAS HANOI 000430

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR EAP/BCLTV, EAP/RSP, AND S/CT

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: PTER PREL VM TH ASEAN CTERR
SUBJECT: MFA ON ASEAN PHUKET MEETING --
- VIETNAM WANTS ASEAN "TERRORISM FREE"

REF: A. BANGKOK 1461 B. FBIS SEP20020225000071

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: FM NIEN MADE A STRONG PITCH FOR A "TERRORISM-FREE" ASEAN REGION WITHIN 15 YEARS AT THE RECENT UNCLASSIFIED

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PHUKET INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS. THE FOREIGN MINISTERS AGREED IN PRINCIPLE ON STRENGTHENING COUNTER-TERRORISM EFFORTS THROUGH ENHANCED LAW ENFORCEMENT COOPERATION, IMPROVED INFORMATION SHARING, AND OTHER MULTI-LATERAL EFFORTS SUCH AS CONTINUED MONITORING OF SUSPECT FINANCIAL TRANSFERS AND THE TRANSIT OF SUSPECT INDIVIDUALS WITHIN AND THROUGH THE REGION. FM NIEN ALSO LINKED THE REDUCTION OF TERRORIST THREATS TO THE NEED FOR POVERTY ALLEVIATION. END SUMMARY.

12. (SBU) TERRORIST FREE ZONE: ACCORDING TO MFA ASEAN DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL LE CHI DUNG, FOREIGN MINISTER NGUYEN DY NIEN AT THE FEBRUARY 21 ASEAN FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING IN PHUKET URGED HIS COLLEAGUES TO STRIVE TO ERADICATE TERRORISM WITHIN ASEAN OVER THE NEXT 10-15 YEARS. FM NIEN PUSHED FOR SUCH A BENCHMARK SO THAT ALL THE ASEAN MEMBERS HAD A COMMON LONG-TERM GOAL TOWARD WHICH TO STRIVE WHEN COMBATING TERRORISM, DUNG CLAIMED, NOTING THAT VIETNAM WANTS FUTURE ASEAN COUNTER-TERRORISM EFFORTS TO BE MULTILATERAL IN FOCUS. DUNG ADDED THAT FM NIEN ENVISIONED THE FOREIGN MINISTRIES OF ASEAN MEMBERS LEADING THE COORDINATION OF FUTURE COUNTER TERRORIST EFFORTS. FM NIEN ALSO REPORTEDLY SUGGESTED THAT ASEAN MEMBERS' NATIONAL POLICE FORCES COOPERATE IN SHARING INFORMATION AND TACTICS THAT HAVE PROVEN SUCCESSFUL IN COMBATING TERRORISM WITHIN THEIR OWN COUNTRIES. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION, DUNG WAS CAREFUL TO STATE THAT THIS WOULD NOT NECESSARILY INVOLVE SHARING OF INTELLIGENCE, BUT RATHER SHARING USEFUL AND PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE.

13. (SBU) IMPLEMENTATION: VIETNAM FORESEES NEW CONCRETE COUNTER-TERRORISM MEASURES TO MATERIALIZE BY THIS SUMMER, DUNG NOTED. DURING UPCOMING ASEAN MEETINGS IN BRUNEI AND UNCLASSIFIED

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KUALA LUMPUR, SPECIALISTS WILL COME TOGETHER TO DISCUSS FUTURE LAW-ENFORCEMENT AND MFA COOPERATION IN GREATER DETAIL. DUNG EXPRESSED VIETNAM'S HOPE THAT, DURING THESE MEETINGS, STRONGER CONCRETE MEASURES WILL BE AGREED UPON IN ORDER TO BEGIN IMPLEMENTATION.

14. (SBU) POVERTY ALLEVIATION: HOWEVER, FM NIEN'S PRIMARY FOCUS FOR COMBATING INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM CENTERED ON POVERTY ALLEVIATION, ACCORDING TO DUNG. FM NIEN ARGUED THAT MANY OF THE RANKS OF TERRORIST CELLS FOUND IN OTHER ASEAN STATES, NOTABLY INDONESIA AND MALAYSIA, WERE FILLED WITH THE POOREST SEGMENTS OF SOCIETY. HE ALSO REPORTEDLY ARGUED THAT THE PEOPLE ATTRACTED TO TERRORISM WERE DRAWN TO THESE GROUPS DUE TO LACK OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AS WELL AS DISGRUNTLEMENT WITH THEIR GOVERNMENTS DUE TO THEIR POOR ECONOMIC STATUS. DUNG SAID THAT FM NIEN HAD ARGUED THAT THE BEST MEANS OF COMBATING TERRORISM WAS TO IMPROVE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR THESE POTENTIAL RECRUITS/MILITANTS, AND, IN SO DOING, LIMIT THE APPEAL OF TERRORISM. DUNG CLAIMED

THAT FM NIEN FIRMLY BELIEVES THAT IMPROVED ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE POOREST PEOPLES OF ASEAN, COMBINED WITH A COORDINATED LAW ENFORCEMENT APPROACH, WILL LIMIT THE GROWTH OF TERRORISM WITHIN ASEAN.

15. (SBU) COMMENT: FM NIEN'S FOCUS ON IMPROVING THE ECONOMIC SITUATION OF ASEAN'S POOREST CITIZENS SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISING, GIVEN THAT VIETNAM HAS BEEN AT THE FOREFRONT OF SHAPING THE DISCUSSIONS ABOUT SHRINKING THE "DEVELOPMENT GAP" AMONG ASEAN MEMBER STATES. VIETNAM'S APPARENT WILLINGNESS WITHIN ASEAN TO SPEAK OUT FORCEFULLY ON COUNTER-TERRORISM IS NONTHELESS A WELCOME DEVELOPMENT.

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